

As Reported by the House Criminal Justice Committee

134th General Assembly

Regular Session

2021-2022

H. B. No. 504

Representatives Carfagna, Johnson

**Cosponsors: Representatives Weinstein, Click, Hillyer, Hall, White, Bird, Seitz,
Ginter, Stewart, John, Kick, Zeltwanger, Stoltzfus, McClain, Abrams, Plummer,
Fowler Arthur, Miller, A.**

A BILL

To amend section 2917.12 of the Revised Code to 1
increase the penalty for "disturbing a lawful 2
meeting" when committed with the intent to 3
disturb or disquiet an assemblage for religious 4
worship or to prevent, disrupt, or interfere 5
with a virtual meeting or gathering for 6
religious worship. 7

BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF OHIO:

Section 1. That section 2917.12 of the Revised Code be 8
amended to read as follows: 9

Sec. 2917.12. (A) No person, with purpose to prevent or 10
disrupt a lawful meeting, procession, or gathering, shall do 11
either of the following: 12

(1) Do any act which obstructs or interferes with the due 13
conduct of such meeting, procession, or gathering; 14

(2) Make any utterance, gesture, or display which outrages 15
the sensibilities of the group. 16

(B) Whoever violates this section is guilty of disturbing a lawful meeting⁷. Except as otherwise provided in this division, disturbing a lawful meeting is a misdemeanor of the fourth degree. Disturbing a lawful meeting is a misdemeanor of the first degree if either of the following applies:

(1) The violation is committed with the intent to disturb or disquiet any assemblage of people met for religious worship at a tax-exempt place of worship, regardless of whether the conduct is within the place at which the assemblage is held or is on the property on which that place is located and disturbs the order and solemnity of the assemblage.

(2) The violation is committed with the intent to prevent, disrupt, or interfere with a virtual meeting or gathering of people for religious worship, through use of a computer, computer system, telecommunications device, or other electronic device or system, or in any other manner.

(C) As used in this section:

(1) "Computer," "computer system," and "telecommunications device" have the same meanings as in section 2913.01 of the Revised Code.

(2) "Virtual meeting or gathering" means a meeting or gathering by interactive video conference or teleconference, or by a combination thereof.

Section 2. That existing section 2917.12 of the Revised Code is hereby repealed.